

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NEWS

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ECONOMICS
AND
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ADMINISTRATION

BUREAU OF THE
CENSUS

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INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates will be published in the press release the week of April 28. The estimates will be revised for the months of January 1993 through March 1997.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Thursday, February 13, 1997

ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES JANUARY 1997

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for January adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$209.1 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 4.9 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from January 1996. Total sales for the November through January period were 4.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The November to December 1996 percent change was revised from +0.6 ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods increased 0.7 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from December and were 6.0 percent above January 1996.

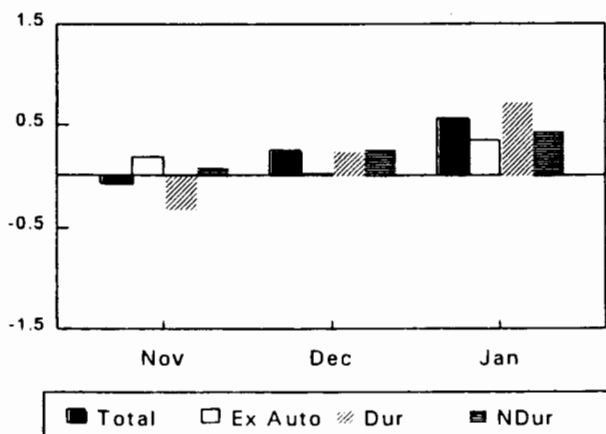
Nondurable goods increased 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from December and were 4.2 percent above January 1996.

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

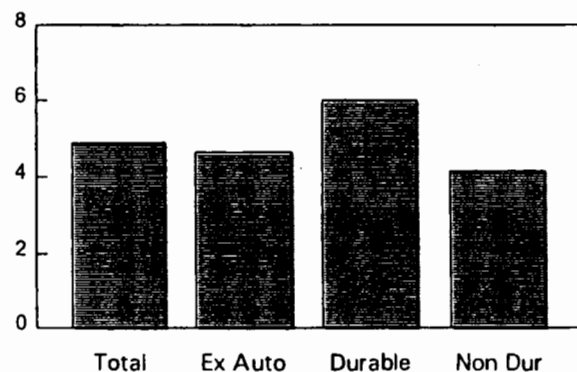
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for February is scheduled to be released March 13, 1997 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Piencykoski, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.
Telephone: (301) 457-2713 or (301) 457-2666.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 482-1986. The data are also available on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1997	1996				1997	1996			
		Jan. ² (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (r)	Jan. ² (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (r)
	Retail trade, total	185,158	248,157	211,873	174,839	237,994	209,052	207,869	207,324	199,262	199,446
	Total (excl. auto group)...	138,930	201,626	165,581	131,644	195,690	157,328	158,773	156,742	150,347	150,755
	Durable goods, total.....	74,273	91,594	81,957	69,646	87,086	85,437	84,815	84,804	80,599	80,872
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	8,558	10,186	10,797	7,983	9,578	11,214	11,078	11,167	10,277	10,594
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	7,588	8,419	6,246	7,154	(*)	8,488	8,628	7,886	8,195
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,298	1,233	986	1,244	(*)	1,233	1,198	1,179	1,165
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	48,226	44,531	46,292	43,195	42,304	51,724	51,096	50,582	48,915	48,891
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	43,535	41,740	43,286	40,538	39,530	48,697	48,088	47,567	45,909	45,699
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	36,748	37,921	35,894	35,063	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,791	3,006	2,657	2,774	(*)	3,008	3,015	3,006	2,992
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	10,571	15,968	12,798	10,153	15,896	11,391	11,327	11,414	10,987	11,212
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	6,797	6,455	4,826	6,676	(*)	5,674	5,702	5,386	5,554
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	7,511	5,405	4,531	7,540	(*)	4,769	4,839	4,715	4,778
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	927	803	638	877	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	110,883	154,583	129,916	105,193	150,908	123,615	123,054	122,720	118,663	118,574
53	General merchandise group stores...	20,073	44,389	30,719	18,514	42,780	26,445	26,102	25,903	24,921	24,892
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	15,577	35,727	24,305	14,144	34,014	20,853	20,580	20,237	19,375	19,370
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	36,248	24,767	14,413	34,541	(*)	20,966	20,682	19,807	19,686
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	1,200	768	458	1,156	(*)	689	687	656	653
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	7,462	5,646	3,912	7,610	(*)	4,833	4,979	4,890	4,869
54	Food stores.....	35,094	37,946	35,975	33,681	38,048	35,757	35,746	35,680	34,984	34,822
541	Grocery stores.....	33,346	35,474	34,048	32,054	35,626	33,819	33,849	33,778	33,148	32,987
554	Gasoline service stations.....	12,453	13,067	13,020	11,678	12,130	13,448	13,334	13,286	12,611	12,371
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,586	15,003	10,727	6,472	15,180	9,211	9,290	9,249	9,235	9,219
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	1,479	960	675	1,579	(*)	795	831	827	836
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	4,314	2,996	1,892	4,533	(*)	2,696	2,670	2,711	2,802
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	6,296	4,421	2,272	6,124	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	2,005	1,602	1,129	2,044	(*)	1,568	1,546	1,566	1,556
58	Eating and drinking places.....	18,461	20,023	19,774	17,583	19,852	20,309	20,184	20,260	19,580	19,597
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,627	9,486	7,480	6,995	8,797	7,727	7,675	7,648	7,123	7,129
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,570	2,023	1,705	2,651	(*)	1,940	1,938	1,969	1,927
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	6,209	5,202	3,716	5,954	(*)	4,003	3,911	3,807	3,946
53,56,57, 594	GAF(4).....	(*)	93,066	63,499	41,171	90,250	(*)	55,020	54,807	52,750	52,930

* Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publications. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-96-12.

(2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

(3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

(4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change ¹					
		Jan. 1997 Advance from --		Dec. 1996 Preliminary from --		Nov. 1996 through Jan. 1997 from --	
		Dec. 1996 (p)	Jan. 1996 (r)	Nov. 1996 (r)	Dec. 1995 (r)	Aug. 1996 through Oct. 1996	Nov. 1995 through Jan. 1996
	Retail trade, total	0.6	4.9	0.3	4.2	1.0	4.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.4	4.6	0.0	4.0	0.9	4.4
	Durable goods, total	0.7	6.0	0.2	4.9	0.9	5.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	1.2	9.1	-0.8	4.6	-0.4	6.5
56 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.2	5.7	1.0	4.9	1.1	5.2
551,2,5,6, 7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	1.3	6.1	1.1	5.2	1.3	5.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0.6	3.7	-0.8	1.0	-1.1	2.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.5	4.2	0.3	3.8	1.0	4.0
53	General merchandise group stores.....	1.3	6.1	0.8	4.9	0.8	5.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.3	7.6	1.7	6.2	1.6	6.0
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	1.4	6.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.0	2.2	0.2	2.7	0.4	2.7
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.1	2.0	0.2	2.6	0.3	2.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.9	6.6	0.4	7.7	2.3	7.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.9	-0.3	0.4	0.8	-2.2	0.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	3.7	-0.4	3.0	2.3	3.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.7	8.5	0.4	7.7	1.7	7.6

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

 (1) ^{*} Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (X 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.2
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.3	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.4	2.0	1.2	2.8	0.3	1.5
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.2	0.9	1.7	0.5	0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	2.0	1.3	0.9	1.9	0.5	0.7
57	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores	1.9	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.1	0.2
	Nondurable goods, total	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	-0.1	0.2
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations	2.3	1.3	1.4	1.5	0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.6	0.8	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	4.8	1.1	1.0	2.2	-0.2	0.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.6	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.4

(1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.

(2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions for Retail trade total are based on the latest 12 months of data while all other kinds of business are based on the preceding 12 months.

